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SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
WHITEHOUSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS USUN NEW YORK 000746

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL PARM KPKO UNSC IZ

SUBJECT: UN/IRAQ: SYG REPLIES TO IRAQI FOREIGN MINISTER'S
LETTERS ON UNIKOM

REF: A. USUN 726

B. USUN 731

1. (U) SYG ANNAN CIRCULATED TO THE COUNCIL HIS MARCH 17
RESPONSE LETTER TO IRAQI FM NAJI SABRI AL-HADITHI'S MARCH 13
AND 16 LETTERS REQUESTING THAT UNIKOM NOT BE WITHDRAWN FROM
THE DMZ (REF A AND B). THE SYG RESPONDED THAT ALL UN
PERSONNEL WOULD BE TEMPORARILY WITHDRAWN FROM IRAQ, THEREFORE
SUSPENDING UN PROGRAMS "DE FACTO." HE STATED, HOWEVER, THAT
"ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES CAN BE RESUMED AS SOON AS THE
SITUATION PERMITS THE RETURN OF UNITED NATIONS PERSONNEL TO
IRAQ WITH THE AUTHORITY OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL." THE FULL
TEXT OF ANNAN'S LETTER IS INCLUDED AT PARA 2.

2. (U) BEGIN TEXT.

HIS EXCELLENCY
MR. NAJI SABRI
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ
BAGHDAD

17 MARCH 2003

EXCELLENCY,

ON SUNDAY 16 MARCH 2003, THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE UNITED
KINGDOM AND THE UNITED STATES CONVEYED TO ME WARNINGS
REGARDING THE CONTINUED SAFETY AND SECURITY OF UN PERSONNEL
PRESENT IN THE TERRITORY OF IRAQ. SIMILAR WARNINGS WERE
TRANSMITTED TO DR. EL-BARADEI OF (THE) IAEA AND DR. HANS
BLIX, THE EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN OF UNMOVIC.

AFTER CONSULTING WITH DR. EL-BARADEI, DR. BLIX AND SENIOR UN
OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACTIVITIES OF UN PERSONNEL IN
IRAQ, I DECIDED THIS MORNING THAT, SINCE I WAS NO LONGER IN A
POSITION TO GUARANTEE THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF THESE
PERSONNEL, I WAS OBLIGED TO WITHDRAW TEMPORARILY ALL
REMAINING HUMANITARIAN PERSONNEL NUMBERING SOME 195
INTERNATIONAL STAFF INCLUDING THE PERSONNEL OF COTECNA AND
SAYBOLT, THE REMAINING 135 UNMOVIC STAFF (WHICH INCLUDES WITH
THE CONCURRENCE OF DR. EL-BARADEI 5 IAEA STAFF), AS WELL AS
ALL UNIKOM MILITARY AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL FROM IRAQ.

I AM WELL AWARE THAT THESE MEASURES WILL LEAD TO THE
SUSPENSION OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMMES
IN IRAQ PURSUANT TO RESOLUTION 986 (1995), AS WELL AS THE
WORK OF BOTH UNMOVIC AND UNIKOM. HOWEVER, THE THREAT TO THE
SAFETY AND SECURITY OF THE PERSONNEL CONCERNED HAS IN EFFECT
RENDERED THEIR MANDATES INOPERABLE.

FOR THE RECORD, I WISH TO STATE THAT I REGARD THOSE
ACTIVITIES AS SUSPENDED DE FACTO. THE MANDATES ESTABLISHED
BY THE RELEVANT SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS UNDER WHICH
THESE ACTIVITIES ARE CARRIED OUT REMAIN IN FORCE UNTIL SUCH
TIME AS THE SECURITY COUNCIL SHOULD DECIDE OTHERWISE.

I INFORMED THE MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL OF MY DECISION
IN THE INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS WHICH TOOK PLACE THIS MORNING
AND THE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL TOOK NOTE OF MY DECISION.

ALTHOUGH THIS DECISION WAS ESSENTIAL FOR THE REASONS
INDICATED, I SHOULD LIKE TO ASSURE YOUR GOVERNMENT THAT THE
UNITED NATIONS CONTINUES TO BE COMMITTED TO ASSISTING THE
PEOPLE OF IRAQ WHO HAVE SUFFERED SUCH HARDSHIP AND HAVE
DEPENDDED FOR SUPPORT ON THE OIL-FOR-FOOD PROGRAMME. THE
ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES CAN BE RESUMED AS SOON AS THE SITUATION
PERMITS THE RETURN OF UNITED NATIONS PERSONNEL TO IRAQ WITH
THE AUTHORITY OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL, WHICH IS RECEPTIVE TO
THIS APPROACH.

PLEASE ACCEPT, EXCELLENCY, THE ASSURANCES OF MY HIGHEST
CONSIDERATION.

(SIGNED)
KOFI A. ANNAN

END TEXT.

NEGROPONTE